

Reconstruction (1939 -

Canada

EMILE VAILLANCOURT

PAMPHLET OFFICE

CANADA'S MISSION IN A FREE WORLD



CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

DIVISION OF ECONOMICS AND HISTORY

405 WEST 117TH STREET,
NEW YORK CITY

JAMES T. SHOTWELL, DIRECTOR

May 11, 1943.

My dear Mr. Vaillancourt:

I am sincerely grateful to you for sending me the text of your address on Canada's Mission in a Free World.

As you doubtless know, this is a matter of sincere interest to me for many years and I have tried to co-operate with friends in Canada in the creation of better understanding between the United States and Canada. You have followed the general line which I have been attempting to follow in some of my addresses, namely, applying to the problems of today the full spirit of that freedom of the mind which is a product of the history of a free people.

I congratulate you heartily on the way in which you have stated this and wish you all success.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) JAMES T. SHOTWELL.

Mr. Emile Vaillancourt,
141, avenue Pagnuelo,
Outremont,
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Canada

CANADA'S MISSION IN A FREE WORLD

(Address to the Kiwanis Club of Ottawa, Château Laurier, Friday, May 7, 1943).

Mr. President,

Gentlemen,

I am deeply conscious of the honour you have done me in asking me to outline for you some of the problems which, in my opinion, will face Canada the day after — and for some time following — victory. In responding to your request, I want to try to make a useful contribution to the thought which is an indispensable part of our effort to win the war, and to win the peace. We are in a period of such confusion of spirit, of such agitation of soul, that it is no longer possible calmly to tabulate the difficulties which lie before us. First, we say, win the war; then we'll see . . . This attitude, commendable in itself — for it is obvious that victory is the primary condition, the first step toward the construction of a world nearer our heart's desire — is nevertheless fraught with potential danger, if it blinds us to the need for meditation, reflection and discussion of the probable conditions and problems of the peace, *now*. It would encourage us to deliberately close our eyes, until the day victory is won, to all the monumental difficulties which will unquestionably confront us in our efforts to establish a new order; and we would find ourselves suddenly, and inevitably, faced by a wall of apparently insurmountable obstacles. It is therefore a solemn duty for political leaders and intellectual organizations of the United Nations — for departments of information and propaganda, for journalists and all groups having the welfare of the people at heart, to **THINK ABOUT THE PEACE**.

The moment, too, is a particularly favourable one in which to assure, by negotiation, by reciprocal concessions, the future union of those who are fighting for freedom; the unity which will be as necessary in the winning of the peace as it is in the winning of the war. Today, in order to win, Russia needs England and the United States; the United States needs England and Russia; China needs them all; and all need China's heroic resistance. All the world has need of all the rest of the world. Before the danger which threatens our civilization, everyone realizes the great need for a tight solidarity in battle. This is the

opportune moment to evolve the formulas, prepare the blueprints, initiate the organization which will transform the countries, allied today, into truly United Nations.

We must face reality with a cold objectivity and evaluate the difficulties before us in order to overcome or circumvent them. They are many, and great. The nations united to destroy the Nazis, resolved to fight until the Axis powers surrender unconditionally, are widely separated, and divided within, on the strategy of peace. It would be difficult to list all the causes of such division, and perhaps unnecessary, for undoubtedly you are aware of many. Let us examine only three of the major issues.

The first dividing factor is the deep, anti-Soviet sentiment which exists within the United Nations. It is easy to understand that the Communist régime does not inspire an unmixed sympathy in the minds of the peoples of the democracies, accustomed to full individual liberty in thought and speech and in the right of free association. It is only necessary to read the newspapers of England, of Canada, of the United States, to perceive this fundamental hostility toward Communist Russia — often hidden beneath expressions of admiration and of sympathy for the gallant fight of the Russian Army. It is no less true that the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics will have rendered the world such a service, by its heroic battle, that it will have gained the right to exert a decisive influence in the plans for the new world. It is also true that the resistance of the Red Army has demonstrated unequivocally that the Russian people, in great majority, are in accord with the political régime at Moscow. The United Nations must collaborate cordially, not, as has been said, with the magnificent Russian peasant defending with his life the soil of his Holy Russia, his country, but with the Communist government, in essential accord with its people. If we wait till the end of the war to organize this collaboration, which must be sincere and cordial to ensure a lasting peace, we will run a grave risk that, the danger past, dramatic conflicts will flare up, which may imperil the reconstruction of the world.

The second difficulty arises from the great reservations, which exist in many minds, in connection with the general politics of England. What has been called British Imperialism has provoked unfavourable reactions, particularly among our friends in the United States. The United States, allied today with England, remember—often more or less subconsciously — that they were born out of a revolt against England.

Many liberal American groups are almost as hostile to English imperialism as they are to Pan-Germanism; and for many important citizens of the United States, the coming of peace must reconcile the problem of India, of Singapore, under quite different conditions from those which our English friends desire. We may add that, in the United States, among conservative groups, the social evolution in England, which daily approaches nearer to state socialism, is regarded with fear and apprehension. Also, in many American citizens—the exact number of whom I will leave to a Gallup poll, but who are certainly numerous — there are, dormant or active, unfavourable sentiments toward the British ideology, which will certainly create grave difficulties in the formulating of peace measures. The official declarations made recently by London and Washington, indicating that President Roosevelt and Mr. Anthony Eden are 95% in agreement on their projects, confirms our gravest fears. When we remember the necessary optimism of the communiqués which follow diplomatic conferences, we may well ask ourselves whether the 5% of disagreement, once the danger is past, will not suddenly become dangerously important.

But still a third difficulty appears. This arises from the spread of pro-German sentiment through the world, and particularly in the United States — a sentiment created by the organization and work of the German nation, by extensive German emigration to a number of the United Nations; by the existence of numerous German refugees, sincerely anti-Nazi, but passionately devoted to Germany, a certain number of whom hold positions of moral and intellectual influence in the United States. We see reappearing the old theme of the true Germany, oppressed by Naziism, the injustices of the Treaty of Versailles, the necessity to wipe out the crimes against humanity committed by Naziism and by the German nation in the course of this war. We will see the manifestations of the hope that a strong conservative Germany is indispensable to check the spread of Communism. And these sentiments, which will be powerful and widely-exploited by a well-organized propaganda, will clash with the vengeful passions unloosed in Europe, in England, in Russia, in the oppressed countries, not only against Naziism, but against the entire German nation, solidly behind the enterprise of Germanic hegemony dreamt by Hitler.

Thus, animated by complex sentiments, often contradictory, by opposing aspirations, the so-called United Nations will find themselves confronted with the problem of Peace. And panic seizes every serious thinker when he contemplates the immensity of the task to be accom-

plished. The Peace of Versailles was long, laborious and painful to formulate. What will be the Peace of Washington. The magnitude of the problems to be solved will dwarf even those of the preceding peace. Europe, Russia and China will have to be fed—technical problems, difficult certainly, but inconsiderable beside the political and ideological problems which the building of a free world will entail. It will not be a matter of delimiting one or more frontiers and of fixing the status of one or two vanquished countries. All the countries freed from oppression will be animated by an enraged nationalism, by a ferocious passion for vengeance; rebellious armies will sprout from the soil of liberated countries, spurred by a burning patriotism, more fitted to create new conflicts with their neighbours than to organize a pacific collaboration with them. The moment the atmosphere of liberty, brought to Europe by the American, Canadian, and British armies permeates anew across the English Channel to the Adriatic, from the Pyrenees to the Vistula, from Spitzberg to Taranto, dramatic civil uprising are likely to develop, to spread like a trail of powder, from one end of the continent to the other, and to destroy what still remains in devastated Europe of a civilization which is the most precious heritage of humanity. A policy of condensed milk, frigidaires, and white curtains, will that be sufficient to build — as our American friends hope—a united and free Europe? The recent experiences in North Africa justify one in holding certain reservations as to the success of a simple ideology of goodwill, ignoring political and neglecting human passions.

This is not intended as an appeal to discouragement and pessimism. It is those who have most carefully evaluated the difficulties who will be best able to resolve them; and this is why on every occasion which is offered me, I appeal for an examination of the problems—to intellectual courage, which is indispensable to success.

The first difficulty which will present itself will be the contact of the armies of liberation with the liberated peoples. May Providence preserve us from a conflict between our armies and the populations which our struggle will have freed from Naziism; and may the sad experience of North Africa be a lesson to us. This experience should have sounded the knell of the opportunist policy of so-called local authorities, which consists in maintaining in their position leaders who have collaborated with the enemy, who have belatedly rallied to the cause of the United Nations, and whose real sentiments must still be suspect to our true friends. Instructions must be given to our military leaders so that, the moment the standards of victory are raised, Liberty re-enters into

the liberated countries, and that those who, in the "underground" fight, have risked their lives day after day for the sacred cause of freedom, are not left under the authority of the men who have persecuted them, imprisoned them and destroyed their compatriots, or given orders to fire on disembarking troops. Here is a series of definite instructions which should be given to the military leaders of the United Nations, by the civil authority; so that at no time will the Armies of liberation become an obstacle to the actual liberation of these peoples. If such is needed, the recent difficulties encountered by the Americans at Martinique should be all that is necessary to confirm us in a policy of agreement with our friends, incompatible with a policy of "arrangement" with our enemies.

Gentlemen, these problems of the period of transition finally reconciled (and we are confident that they will be), there will remain the task of winning the Peace—the peoples' Peace, the Peace of free democracies; the peace of nations resolved to remain free; determined to defend their liberty; determined to fight to maintain the Peace of the free peoples of the world. The problems are staggering; it would be presumptuous of me to attempt to examine all of them, even superficially. With your permission, I will merely outline a few principles on which I believe a sound peace can and should be founded, principles which I have already formulated in a statement which has met with a favourable reception among many of the friends of liberty.

FIRST POINT. Frontiers, in the free federated world, must lose a great deal of their significance, of their narrowness. Let me repeat here the text of a radio broadcast which I made, through the courtesy of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation recently. Economic and tariff barriers which divide countries are often an offense to the spirit. Have you ever reflected that, while the soldiers, the sailors and the airmen of both the United States and Canada shed their blood impartially; while the two countries exchange or distribute their resources in tanks and airplanes, while Canadians die for the citizens of the United States and vice versa, without the possibility of any accounting on either side, regiments of customs officials on an imaginary boundary line keep Canadian cigarettes from entering the United States — and vice versa? Think of the arbitrary obstacles placed between the citizens of the United States and Canada, while they are united in a heroic struggle, and in death. These symbolic examples are but an evidence of all the difficulties of communication, of exchange, of traffic, which constitute an absurd and anachronistic obstacle in the lives of

these peoples, united today in battle, and who must remain united tomorrow in peace. These spiritual offenses, these offenses against good human relationships, must be expunged by a revolutionary peace — a People's Peace.

SECOND POINT. Restriction of national sovereignty in the United Nations. Recently, in Ottawa, a wellknown journalist supported the thesis that Canada should, when peace comes, attenuate certain allegiances to the British Crown in order to assume duties and obligations toward the highest federal authorities of the United Nations. His justifiable statement provoked violent reactions in the Canadian parliament; and he was abusively accused of disloyalty to England—even accused of sedition. This shows how little we are prepared for a true realization of a Federation of United Nations. Actually, the point he was making — vital to Canada — was only in reality a particular aspect of a general problem which confronts all the Allied Nations in the necessity for unification which is essential to them. European, American, Asiatic, or world federations will certainly be formed, within which limitations of autonomy will have to be accepted by their members, transfers of sovereignty will have to be accepted by nations, between national powers and the organizations of the international federation: limitation of the sovereignty of the federated nations, with respect to armed forces, tariff barriers, propaganda, external affairs, colonial policies. In the new world, in the new "United States" which peace will bring into being, whole nations — even the largest, even the most victorious — must abandon certain of their sovereign national powers to the higher authority of the federation of United nations. Imagine the intellectual revolution this will give rise to, what psychological preparation it will entail, in all the countries at war, therefore in Canada. A sound peace, a continuing peace, can be achieved only at this cost.

THIRD POINT. Revision of all imperialisms. The destiny of empires, of all empires, will be on the table at the Peace Conference. How many men are actually capable of bringing to this problem an unprejudiced deliberation, repressing passionate nationalistic ambitions, a calm consideration entirely devoted to the peoples' peace? A new constitution must be established for all colonial populations, taking into account the universal rights of men, and the duty which peoples of advanced civilization owe to those peoples still in the "dark ages" of science and technique. All the resources of all the countries should be placed at the service of all, in an organization where the exploitation of man by man will have no place. The ideology of liberty and universal

collaboration which will sweep over a world freed from its nightmare, will bring with it a revision of the constitutions of colonies, of dominions, of protectorates, of territories under mandate. Let us prepare, through work and through meditation, for this inevitable revolution.

FOURTH POINT. The creation of a peace "in evolution"—capable of continuous progress toward perfection. The world is in a constant and terribly rapid period of evolution. The needs and the ambitions of peoples change from day to day, and from year to year. Peace should not be constituted in a definite, crystallized form; there must be mechanisms for continuous revision, for adjustment and readjustment, put into action and rendered efficacious, if we want to achieve a peace, continually creative and at the same time sound, with a perpetually mobile equilibrium, perpetually moving and perpetually renewed.

Before this herculean task, all the representatives of the United Nations, assembled around the conference table, must demonstrate a creative imagination, a passionate civic spirit, and high intellectual courage. Let us reflect on the immense task, on the tremendous responsibility, which will be Canada's.

We are in an exceptional position. We do not malign anyone in stating that, among the warring nations, Canada is the one with the purest intentions, the most disinterested, the most passionately devoted to an unselfish ideal. Our friends in the United States who have mobilized all their immense material and moral forces in the service of the cause of liberty; our friends in the United States, on whose might victory may depend, entered the war when they were odiously and treacherously attacked by the perfidious Japanese — when Germany and Italy had declared war on them. They entered the conflict because it was imposed on them. Canada, the whole of Canada, went into the war during its earliest days, at a moment when she had not only not been attacked, but when she was not in the slightest degree menaced: she entered the war to establish her heroic place in the defence of human values, menaced by German aggression; because of her fidelity, to the point of the ultimate sacrifice, to all which is noble and great in modern civilization. Her place in the world combat, pure and disinterested, assures her an authority which should be placed at the service of a free world.

Let us go further. We speak of English imperialism; rightly or wrongly, this appears a grave problem to many. We speak of American

Imperialism: rightly or wrongly, it is certain that there are unquiet consciences on the subject of American domination of the world. We speak of the Communization of the world under the Moscow régime. Rightly or wrongly, it is certain that this thought gravely disturbs the spirit and the conscience of many free men. Who speaks of Canadian Imperialism? No one. Canada, in this war with all her material and human resources; with her natural wealth, the power of her factories; her mineral, forest and agricultural resources; the labour of her workers; the fighting power of her soldiers, sailors, and airmen—Canada has no project of conquest, no personal ambition for conquest or Imperialism. Her sole objective is the cause of human liberty — to help, with all her might, in the construction of a world freed from the nightmare of war, where, in peace, men may regain their freedom and their human joys, which are the right of all — and which all might have, if humanity were wise.

But, as a Frenchman in a high political position has said, authority does not ask: authority takes. Let Canada take her authority. Passionately disinterested; linked to England by relationships sometimes strained but of which the difficulties themselves have created a powerful solidarity in fact and in sentiment; linked to France by ties of blood, of sentiment, and of tradition; sincere friend of the United States, her powerful neighbour, with whom our relations are always cordial; having recently established diplomatic relations with the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, and with heroic China; Canada has, in the constellation of the United Nations, a place of first importance, assured her by the might of her fighting force and the immeasurable service which her devotion and sacrifice have rendered to the United Nations. Canada has only to take this place, to take it courageously; she has only to confront the responsibilities which are hers; and she will earn the gratitude of the world.

Let her abandon this inferiority complex which has, through centuries of colonial thinking, been imbedded in her citizens, and often in her political leaders. Canada has reached her majority, she is free, she is strong, she is disinterested. Let her realize her majority, her liberty, her power. Let her place them all in service of the cause of liberty; toward the liberation of man, and the building of a peaceful world, with justice and freedom for all. And Canada, whose vocation is that of a missionary, will have fulfilled her mission.

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